

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please substitute the following text for the pending claims of the same number.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An air suspension system for a vehicle having a chassis, a front axle housing and a rear axle housing; said system comprising;

a) an elongated torque arm having a forward end, an intermediate section and a rear end; the forward end of said torque arm being pivotally mounted to said chassis, said intermediate section being mounted over said rear axle housing, and the rear end of said torque arm extending rearwardly of said rear axle housing;

b) shackle assembly mounted on said rear end of said torque arm;

c) an elongated lever arm having a forward end, an intermediate section and a rear end, said lever arm having its rear end pivotally mounted to said chassis;

d) said shackle assembly supporting said forward end of said lever arm; **and**

e) an air spring mounted on said intermediate section of said lever arm between said lever arm and said chassis to provide load support to said chassis; **and**

f) said shackle assembly connects with said lever arm at a point that is located between the air spring and the axle housing.

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2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An air suspension system for a vehicle having a chassis, a front axle housing and a rear axle housings; said system comprising;

a) an elongated torque arm having a forward end, an intermediate section and rear end;

b) means for pivotably mounting the forward end of said torque arm to said chassis;

c) means for fixedly mounting the intermediate section of said torque arm on said rear axle housing,

d) said rear end of said torque arm extending rearwardly of said rear axle housing;

e) a shackle assembly mounted to the rear end of said torque arm and extending downwardly from said torque arm;

f) an elongated lever arm having a forward end, an intermediate section and a rear end;

g) a bracket for pivotably mounting the rear end of said lever arm to said chassis;

h) said shackle assembly supporting said forward end of said lever arm; **and**

i) an air spring mounted on said intermediate section of said lever arm between said lever arm and said chassis to provide load support to said chassis ; **and**

e) said shackle assembly connects with said lever arm at a point that is located between the air spring and the axle housing.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An air suspension system for a vehicle having a chassis a front axle and one rear axle and an associated axle housing; said system comprising;

a) an elongated torque arm having a forward end, an intermediate section and a rear end; the forward end of said torque arm being pivotally mounted to said chassis, the intermediate section of said torque arm being mounted on said rear axle, and a rear end of said torque arm extending rearwardly of said rear axle;

b) an elongated lever arm having a forward end, an intermediate section and rear end, said lever arm having its rear end pivotally mounted to said chassis;

c) a shackle assembly including a hanger bracket that mounts on the rear end of said torque arm in a position rearward and adjacent said axle, and said shackle assembly including a first bushing and legs that support the forward end of said lever arm, said legs being mounted on said bushing and can articulate on said bushing; ~~and~~

d) an air spring mounted on a section of said intermediate section of said lever arm between said lever arm and said chassis to provide load support to said chassis and

e) said shackle assembly connects with said lever arm at a point that is located between the air spring and the axle housing.

~~4.~~ OMITTED FROM ORIGINAL

4 ~~5.~~ (ORIGINAL) An air suspension system as in claim 1 wherein said shackle assembly is mounted at a spaced distance from said rear end of said torque arm.

5 ~~5.~~ (ORIGINAL) An air suspension system as in claim ~~5~~⁴ wherein said distance is two to four inches from said rear end.

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6 ~~7~~. (ORIGINAL) An air suspension is in claim 1 wherein the front end of said lever arm has a C-shaped loop that contacts said shackle assembly.

7 ~~8~~. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An air suspension system is in claim 1 wherein the front end of said lever arm as ~~a~~ an O-shaped loop or eye that contacts said shackle assembly.

8 ~~9~~. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~As~~ An air suspension system has in claim 1 wherein said shackle assembly includes a first bushing for enabling articulation of the shackle assembly relative to said torque arm, and wherein said shackle includes a second bushing for enabling articulation of said lever arm relative to said shackle assembly.

9 ~~10~~. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An air suspension system ~~is~~ as in claim 1 wherein said shackle assembly enables a double articulation action.

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11.

(NEW) An air suspension system for a vehicle comprising:

torque arm having a forward end, an intermediate section and a rear end;

shackle assembly mounted on said rear end of said torque arm;

lever arm having a forward end, an intermediate section and a rear end;

air spring configured to be mounted between the intermediate section of the lever arm and a vehicle chassis;

the forward end of the torque arm is configured to be pivotally mounted to a vehicle chassis,

the torque arm is configured so that when the system is mounted to a vehicle, the intermediate section of the torque arm is located over a vehicle rear axle housing and the rear end of the torque arm extends rearwardly of the vehicle rear axle housing;

the lever arm is configured so that the rear end of the lever arm may be pivotally mounted to a vehicle chassis; and

the shackle assembly is configured to connect with the lever arm at a point that is located between the air spring and the axle housing.